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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14245

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJ: KIRILENKO LAUDED ON 70TH BIRTHDAY

1. FOLLOWING SOVIET PRACTICE WHICH DATES BACK AT LEAST TO SUSLOV'S 70TH BIRTHDAY IN 1972, ON KIRILENKO'S 70TH BIRTHDAY SEPTEMBER 8 PRAVDA AND OTHER CENTRAL NEWSPAPERS FRONT-PAGED LARGE PHOTOGRAPH OF HIM, CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM PARTY AND GOVERNMENT, AND DECREE AWARDING HIM ORDER OF LENIN AND SECOND GOLD MEDAL "HAMMER AND SICKLE."

2. SIZE OF KIRILENKO'S PHOTO AND FORMAT OF MESSAGE AND DECREE IN PRAVDA WERE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO PRESS COVERAGE OF 70TH BIRTHDAY AWARDS TO SUSLOV, PODGORNY AND KOSYGIN. WORDING OF THE SUPREME SOVIET DECREE WAS IDENTICAL IN ALL FOUR INSTANCES. TEXT OF SUSLOV'S CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE WAS SOMEWHAT MORE LAVISH THAN IN CASE OF HIS THREE COLLEAGUES; TEXT OF STATEMENTS CONGRATULATING PODGORNY AND KOSYGIN DIFFERED FROM KIRILENKO STATEMENT BY INCLUDING SENTENCE REFERRING TO RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS OF THE TWO MEN. IN ADDITION, PODGORNY WAS DESCRIBED AS DISTINGUISHED FIGURE IN WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, A PHRASE ABSENT FROM STATEMENTS ON KOSYGIN AND KIRILENKO.

3. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, TV EVENING NEWS SEPTEMBER 8 ANNOUNCED PUBLICATION OF BOOK OF KIRILENKO'S SPEECHES AND ARTICLES WHILE CAMERA ZOOMED IN ON PHOTO
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OF KIRILENKO AT FRONT OF BOOK. PRAVDA SEPTEMBER 9

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CARRIED BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT BOOK, NOTING THAT ITS CONTENTS UNDERSCORED BREZHNEV'S OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS IN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY.

4. COMMENT. MEDIA TREATMENT OF KIRILENKO'S 70TH BIRTH-DAY SEEMS ENTIRELY IN LINE WITH STANDARD PRACTICE FOR FULL POLITBURO MEMBERS (CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBER PONOMAREV'S 70TH WAS GIVEN COMPARATIVELY SUBDUED COVERAGE, AND HIS AWARD WAS "HERO OF SOCIALIST LABOR" ACCOMPANIED BY AN ORDER OF LENIN AND GOLD MEDAL "HAMMER AND SICKLE.") IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT KIRILENKO AND BREZHNEV HAVE BEEN GRATUITOUSLY LINKED IN THE PUBLIC MEDIA ON TWO OCCASIONS SINCE THE 25TH CONGRESS: IN A JUNE 16 BOOK REVIEW REGARDING PARTY WORK IN ZAPOROZH'YE (THE BOOK ITSELF SAID A LOT ABOUT BREZHNEV BUT BARELY MENTIONED KIRILENKO--SEE MOSCOW 8964) AND THE BOOK REVIEW MENTIONED ABOVE. IN SHORT, KIRILENKO'S STAR PRESENTLY SEEMS TO BE SHINING WITH AT LEAST ITS PRE-CONGRESS BRIGHTNESS.

UPCOMING: BREZHNEV'S 70TH BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 19.
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